

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 A-01 AID-05 CCO-00 HA-05 OC-06
OMB-01 OPR-02 CA-01 MCT-01 SCS-06 PC-01 SY-05
USSS-00 INT-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /089 W

-----078461 121332Z /46

R 120030Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3252

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT MORESBY 0691

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PP

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY STRIKE, SOME VIOLENCE

1. INTENSITY OF VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH STRIKE OF
UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA (UPNG) STUDENTS WHICH BEGAN
MAY 8 HAS INCREASED. STUDENTS BOYCOTTED CLASSES AND BARRICADED
ACCESS TO CAMPUS MAY 8 TO DEMAND A REDUCTION IN THE TWO-YEAR
SUSPENSION OF A STUDENT FOR HAVING STRUCK A TUTOR. THE
STUDENT, VINCENT TOLIMAN, SON OF THE LATE AND RESPECTED
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT, HAD AT ONE TIME
HEADED UPNG STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS. TOLIMAN HAS A PREVIOUS
RECORD OF PERSONAL VIOLENCE.

2. STRIKES CONTINUED IN SAME VEIN, WITH GOROKA TEACHERS
COLLEGE STUDENTS BOYCOTTING THEIR CLASSES IN SHOW OF
SOLIDARITY (AND TO SUPPORT AN EXPELLEE THERE, TOO).
THROUGH MAY 9 UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MET MAY 10, VOTED TO
UPHOLD TOLIMAN SUSPENSION AND TO REJECT STUDENT DEMAND
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THAT VICE CHANCELLOR RENAGI LOHIA RESIGN. AS RESULT,
STUDENTS, EVENING MAY 10, BLOCKED MAJOR HIGHWAY NEAR
UPNG AND ATTACKED POLICE, SECURITY GUARDS, UNIVERSITY
COUNCILLORS, AND VICE CHANCELLOR, INJURING A NUMBER,
ONE CRITICALLY. AS OF MORNING MAY 11, HIGHWAY STILL
BLOCKED, HEAVY POLICE AND SECURITY GUARD REINFORCEMENTS
HAVE MOVED IN AND A PROFESSOR LIVING ON EDGE OF CAMPUS

REPORTS THAT SITUATION UGLY AND TEAR GAS EMPLOYED.
POLICE ARRESTED 60 STUDENTS THIS MORNING. A FIRE WAS
STARTED IN VICE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE. RADIO JUST
ANNOUNCED THAT UNIVERSITY COUNCIL HAS GIVEN STUDENTS
UNTIL 1800 LOCAL TIME TO DROP STRIKE OR IT WILL CLOSE
UNIVERSITY AND SEND STUDENTS BACK IN THEIR VILLAGES.

3. THERE GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT ISSUE IS NOT
POLITICALLY MOTIVATED. HOWEVER, IT IS FIRST STUDENT
USE OF LARGE-SCALE VIOLENCE AGAINST AUTHORITY AT UPNG
AND, AFTER THREE AND ONE-HALF DAYS, SITUATION APPEARS
TO BE DETERIORATING RATHER THAN IMPROVING. THERE LITTLE
DANGER OF STUDENTS AFFECTING HEART OF PORT MORESBY BUT
THEY CAN, AND HAVE AT TIMES THIS WEEK, CUT ACCESS TO
SATELLITE SUBURB OF 15,000.
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